

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Parking~~ Central parking meter (100) for controlling a plurality of parking spaces, comprising: an input device for means of payment; a selection device (3) for selecting a parking time to be paid; a central control device (6); a return device for the return payment of an amount of money corresponding to the parking time which has not been used; and a display adapted for indicating a paid parking time as well as for indicating an amount of money which has not been used, the central control device (6) includes a fee table and a time generator (4) for producing a clock signal so that the amount of the charge to be returned is calculated by the central control device (6), wherein the input device and the return device is a read-write unit (2) for a chip card (1), wherein a code is assigned to the chip card (1) by the central control device (6) whereby the chip card is recognizable by the central control device (6) by means of said code when inserted in the read-write unit (2).

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) Parking meter according to claim 1, wherein the selection device (3) is a keyboard.

5. (Previously presented) Parking meter according claim 1, and further comprising a battery.

6. (Currently Amended) Method for centrally running parking areas with a central parking meter (100), comprising the steps of: selecting a parking time via a selection device (3); inserting a chip card (1) of a user into a read-write unit (2) of the parking meter (100); ~~assigning~~ a central control device (6) of the parking meter (100) assigns a code to the chip card (1), and which code assigns said code a credit account; charging an amount of money corresponding to the selected parking time from the chip card (1) and crediting said amount of money to ~~verified~~ by the credit account; indicating the selected parking time with an indicating device (7, 8, 9) of the parking meter (100); monitoring ~~overseeing~~ the parking time using a time generator (4)

with ~~of~~ the central control device (6); and, if the parking time is terminated before expiration of the already paid parking time, the chip card (1) is inserted into the read-write unit (2) and is connected with the credit account via the code, the actual ~~observed~~ parking time is compared with the selected parking time and based on the difference an ~~a corresponding~~ amount of money to be paid back is determined by the central control device (6) and said the amount of money to be paid back is credited to is ~~returned by a by a credit on~~ the chip card (1), and said amount of money to be paid back is displayed ~~the charge to be returned~~ ~~is reproduced~~ by a visual indicating device (7).

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 6, wherein a parking space is selected via the selection device (3).

10. (Previously presented) Method according to claim 6, wherein the parking meter is operated with a battery.

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11. (Previously presented) Parking meter according to claim 1, wherein the selection device (3) is configured for selecting a parking space.